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It has been long the custom amongst the shallow and conceited, who form after all a tolerably numerous class, to term our revered Alma, 'the silent sister.' Though we hold with Lear that a 'voice ever soft, gentle and low,' is an excellent thing in woman, we scarcely know why even ignorance, in the depth and breadth of its presuming folly, has been pleased to apply this sobriquet to the University of Dublin. The glorious galaxy of illustrious names which grace her annals, would at least *not suffer by comparison* with those of either of her English rivals, (if we must use that ugly and invidious phrase, in speaking of the 'sisters three' who ought rather to resemble the 'linked graces' in kindness of feeling and mutual support,) since the date of her foundation. But this idle imputation is not the only instance in which less than justice has been done to the same institution. The university club of London, (not the London-university club,) affects to exclude her graduates; and in biographical dictionaries and recent republications, the credit of Leland's Demosthenes, one of the ablest, perhaps the very ablest translation of a Greek prose classic in our language, is attributed to Dr. Leland of Trin. Coll. *Cam.* This is going too far; it is bad enough to malign us, but to steal and wear our laurels, while stabbing us in the dark, is somewhat overmuch. Of late years, two right reverend prelates have, however, stood forth, the uncompromising advocates of our righteous cause, and have nobly combated the senseless reproach which has been ignorantly cast upon their literary parent. Each has approved himself a worthy son of so noble a mother. The one excels in elegance and eloquence of polished style; the other stands unrivalled for close reasoning, luminous method, and the clear, concise, and admirable logic of his pen: while both are alike distinguished for deep research and varied learning, combined with unpretending piety and great good sense.

The author now under review has also well sustained the reputation of our university by his literary efforts, and the present work will add another wreath to his garland of fame, as a scholar and a man of general literary powers and attainments. We were glad to see, too, that the volume has been printed at the university press. We have seldom seen a more beautiful specimen of typography issue from the Clarendon. But as we write for English readers more especially, we must give some little insight into the life of Æschylus, and a brief outline of this drama. Æschylus, then, deservedly called by the Athenians, "the father of tragedy," was the son of Euphorion, and brother to the hero Cynægyrus; in his youth he had read and admired Homer. He felt within, the stirrings of poetic fire, but with the true spirit of genius, determined to found a new species of writing, for Homer he felt could not be rivalled, and second *he* would be to none. He then invented the stage, and the plan of the drama. After he had for ten years delighted his countrymen with his plays, Darius invaded Greece. Æschylus laid down the pen only to seize the sword. He fought in the three famous battles of Marathon, Salamis, Plataea. In war he approved himself a hero, and was honoured by Athens equally with Miltiades. When Greece had repelled her invaders, he resumed his studies. The Athenians, proverbial for their love of change, now neglected him, and turned their attention to Sophocles, who was then a young man. When admiration

* Græce. Teutsch. English. By James Kennedy, D.D. F.T.C.D. &c.

has ceased, the change from coldness to hostility is easy. Some alleged impious expressions in his Eumenides irritated them against him;—he was brought to trial, and with difficulty escaped. Disgusted with the fickle conduct and ingratitude of Athens, he retired to Sicily, where he perished, according to story, in a strange manner. An eagle let fall a tortoise which he bore in his talons, from a great height, upon the head of the luckless bard, as he walked uncovered through the fields; he was bald, and the bird mistook his head for a stone. When dead, the Athenians, now become sensible of their loss, decreed to him honors never granted any poet before.

Of seventy plays which he wrote, but seven have been spared to us by time. The *Agamemnon* is one of his last, perhaps his best. The story is briefly this:—Agamemnon, king of Argos, on setting out for the Trojan war, had promised his queen Clytemnestra, to communicate by signal-fires, the first intelligence of the capture of Troy. After ten long years of waiting and watching, the beacon-light is at length descried. A herald arrives soon after, announcing Agamemnon's return, and the king himself, accompanied by Cassandra, presently reaches the palace; he retires to take a bath on his arrival. Clytemnestra had left a tunic for him, the sleeves of which were sewed up at the ends for the purpose of embarrassing him. While he was entangled in this, she introduced Ægysthus, with whom she had intrigued during Agamemnon's absence, and both dispatched him with repeated blows of an axe. The scene opens, and, according to the strict unity of place so generally adhered to by the Greek dramatists, continues, in the royal palace at Argos. The person placed on the roof-top to watch for the signal-fire, soliloquizes, praying to the gods for a respite from the hardships and length of his tedious weary watch.—While he speaks, he describes the wished-for light flashing from crag to crag, and filled with joy, hastens down to acquaint the queen.—He throws out a dark hint at the same time, to awake the interest of the audience—

—“ Yet might these walls, were voice
Accorded them, in eloquent strain speak out.”

But here he suddenly stops short. The chorus, composed of the old men of the council of state, now enter. They commence an ode, confessedly the most difficult and obscure piece extant, in the whole compass of Greek literature. The queen appears at a distance offering up sacrifices, in thanksgiving to the gods. They ask her what she does—she, intent on her employment, makes no reply. They then break out into a panegyric upon the enterprize against Troy, with a burden recurring after a certain number of verses—

“ The dirge, the dirge attune! the good prevail!”

Clytemnestra now comes forward, and in reply to their enquiries, tells that Troy is taken, and how she had been made acquainted with the tidings. The chorus again break out into a hymn of gratitude to the gods. Clytemnestra points out to them a herald crowned with olive branches, approaching. He comes forward, and begins by adoring his natal earth, according to the ancient custom. He then proceeds to apostrophize the palace of Agamemnon. The chorus interrupt him, and ask him many questions;—he describes the hardships during the voyage and siege. The queen now addresses the herald, and bids him tell the king to hasten his approach:—

" Bid him, the object of his people's love,
To come with utmost speed; and when returned,
May he find faithful to her charge his consort,
Such as he left her, bland, as the house mastiff
To him, but fierce to those intending ill,
And such in all things else, inviolate guarding
Thro' time's long lapse, each seal he left impressed."—v. 588–593.

The chorus detain the herald, however, to ask if Menelaus accompanies their return. The herald replies, that they parted company from his ship in a gale, and describes the storm, but that they know no more. The chorus now resume their song; it begins with reflections upon the disasters which Paris and Helen had brought upon their countries, and concludes with an address to Agamemnon, who now enters in a chariot, followed by Cassandra in another. Agamemnon speaks:—

" First Argos, and the deities of the land
Who my return have favoured, and the work
Of retribution, which on Priam's city
I have accomplished, to address is meet.
For the gods, passing judgment, not as tongue
Of pleader prompts, cast with one mind the lots
Decreeing Ilium's downfall, ruin fraught
To men, into the vase of blood, whilst hope
The opposite one approached, but by the hand
Found it unfilled. Now by its smoke, is marked,
Ascending still, Troy's devastated town:
Ate's storms rage, while to dense vapour turn'd
Its wealth exhales the joint expiring ember,
For these our debt of mindful gratitude,
To render to the gods befits us well."—x. 7. 2.—v. 785–796.

He adds beautifully, and, alas! too truly:—

—— " In few is born the feeling,
Which an unenvious reverence prompts to friends
Whom fortune smiles on."

He proceeds:—

—— " The soul-plaguing venom,
Absorbed into the heart, his anguish doubles
In the disease's victim, while beneath
The load of his own wretchedness he groans,
And at the sight, too, of his neighbour's weal."—v. 809–812.

We may remark from this and the herald's speech, the simple though mistaken piety of the ancients. Clytemnestra now speaks:—

" Citizens! senior chiefs revered among
The Argives! to make known to you the feelings
I bear of fond affection tow'rd my lord,
I shall not blush: time wears timidity
Away from mortals; from none other learning
Shall I describe how burdensome hath been
Existence to me, during the whole season
That he remained 'neath Ilium."

She proceeds to describe her troubles. She tells Agamemnon that his son Orestes had been given in charge to Phocius the Strophian, lest on any report of misfortune to his father, the people should rebel and kill him; that therefore it was that his son did not meet him. But this whole scene, so exquisitely beautiful in the original, it is in our opinion utterly impossible to translate. Clytemnestra describes her uneasy restlessness while he was absent:—

——— "In my dreams
 Ev'n by the tiny rustlings of the gnat
 Buzzing, I was aroused, more woes beholding
 Encircling thee, than time was witness to,
 Who shared my slumber."—v. 866-869.

We scarcely approve of the last part of this quotation; it is faithful to the original, but at some small expense of delicacy. She then addresses her lord as being as grateful to her sight, as—

"The land unhop'd for, that meets sailors' eyes,
 Th' appearance of a fair day after storm,
 To the parched wayfarer the fountain rill."

But continues she:—

——— "Now, dear life, descend to me
 Forth from this chariot, not, my liege, impressing
 Thy foot, Troy's desolator, on the ground.
 Maidens why linger ye, to whom the task
 Has been assigned of carpeting the way?
 Quick be his path with purple spread."—v. 874-885.

Agamemnon at first refuses to permit such honours to be paid him, which he says are due only to the gods. At length, the feigned affection of his wife prevails; he commends his captive Cassandra to her care:—

——— "I pray thee now attend
 This stranger in, with friendly courtesy:
 On him who bears mild sway doth heav'n look down
 With approbation, from the seats above.
 For none doth undergo with free consent,
 The yoke of servitude; but she the flow'r
 Of various spoil select, conferred on me
 By the army, hath attended on my steps."

Both now retire and leave Cassandra and the chorus—the latter sings another ode reflecting on the king's return and this interview. Clytemnestra again appears and invites Cassandra to enter, assuring her that the chains of captivity shall sit as lightly as is possible upon her; Cassandra maintains an obstinate silence. Gifted with pre-science of the future, she foresees the murder which the queen had planned. Clytemnestra, therefore, after ineffectually endeavouring to persuade her, retires enraged. Cassandra now breaks silence, and calls upon Apollo. This passage was thought, and most deservedly, a masterpiece by the ancients. We regret that the extent of extracts will compel us to give but a very faint outline of it. She is seized with the prophetic phrenzy. We shall give a part of her second inspiration:—

"Woe is me—dark train of ills,
 The torturing pang of the truth-telling spirit
 Once more distracts my sense, disturbing me
 With its prelusive chants. See ye those youths,
 Those stationed near the palace—airy forms
 Of dreams resembling? Boys, as tho' from friends
 Having received their death, their hands replete
 With flesh, dire food from their own bodies ta'en,
 And with their entrails—load most piteous!—bearing
 Those vitals which appeased a father's hunger."—v. 1187-1195.

This alludes to a horrid fable, that Atreus had in this palace served up to his brother Thyestes the roast flesh of his own sons. A third

time Cassandra is seized with the divine afflatus, which reveals to her what Clytemnestra is perpetrating behind the scenes :—

“ Ah! me, how glows this flame! assails it me?
 Lycian Apollo, woe is me! oh, horror!
 Yon biped lioness consorting with
 The wolf (*Ægysthus*,) will in the absence of her mate
 The noble lion, end with her own hand
 My wretched life
 She 'gainst her lord
 Whetting the brand, exults in the proud thought
 Of rend'ring him the retribution due
 For my abduction—death. Why yet retain I
 These trappings, mockery of my lost estate,
 Sceptres and wreaths around my neck bespeaking
 My gift of presage? Thee ere my life's term
 Draws to its close, foredoomed I shall destroy.
 Away to ruin prostrate in the dust!
 Thus I requite you! Choose instead of me
 Some other whom with wealth of woes to bless.”—v. 1230–1241.

She now foretells that neither she nor Agamemnon shall fall un-avenged. She then in “noble disdain of death,” desires that she may meet it at once, and rushes toward the palace. The chorus endeavour to restrain her. She stops at the threshold and hesitates, turns and bidding the chorus farewell, gives them presents and addresses a prayer to the sun (or Apollo,) to avenge her death. The chorus remain astonished. Agamemnon's voice is now heard shrieking in the agonies of death. Amazed and terrified they debate upon what is most expeditious to be done: they proceed in a body to the palace, when Clytemnestra, covered with her husband's blood, comes boldly out to meet them. She, disdaining subterfuge, audaciously avows how she had slain her prince. The chorus express their astonishment at her impiety. The palace gates then opening expose to view the body of Agamemnon weltering in gore: the chorus are shocked; she replies :—

“ Ye deal with me as a weak-minded woman!
 Nay then, with spirit undismay'd I say it
 To you all conscious—praise me as you will,
 Or blame me—'tis alike—there Agamemnon
 My consort lies a corse—just retribution
 Achieved by this right hand.”—v. 1374–1379.

The chorus, who are state councillors, doom her to banishment; she answers by reproaching herself for not banishing Agamemnon when he had sacrificed her daughter Iphigeneia, whose death she pretends was the cause of this murder. She ends by defying them, and swears an oath that nothing should frighten or drive her away, while her lover *Ægysthus* is faithful. At length the guilty paramour appears. He endeavours to justify the part he had taken in the assassination, by saying that his father had sworn to avenge his injuries upon the sons of Atreus. The chorus address him as boldly as they had done Clytemnestra; he appears mortified. The queen, calm and composed amid her guilt, advises him to despise their power and clamour, and all retire.—Thus ends this play, which we unhesitatingly pronounce the finest of this most powerful and original author; although Aristophanes represents *Æschylus* as thinking more highly of the famous “Seven Chiefs.” Sel-

dom, however, is an author the truest judge of his own productions.—In this his lofty and somewhat truculent genius, had free scope. In this he uses the boldest and finest metaphors and ideas—witness the celebrated *τοῦ ξυνοδότης χρόνου*. Here are to be found the touches too of truest and deepest pathos. Though Agamemnon appears but once, his calm dignity interests us, and his unsuspecting confidence excites our pity for his tragical death. Æschylus has in fact in a few lines given a perfect *αυαξ ἀνδρῶν*. The artful development of the wicked character of Clytemnestra is most admirable. In fine, this which was one of his last “crowned” plays, is the finest and most finished, at the same time that it is the most difficult. It only remains for us to say a few words of the execution of the translation, of which our readers may judge in some measure from the specimens we have given. Dr. Kennedy has most faithfully adhered to his original. But he sometimes, for that very reason, is inferior in poetry and beauty to Potter. As to his method of translating the odes, we cannot offer it our approbation. We hardly think it possible for less than a Milton or a Shelley, to give a perfect example of the Greek ode metre in English. As to the German, we shall say nothing; for notwithstanding our known attachment to that noble tongue, we confess ourselves somewhat puzzled to conjecture why it is introduced here. There is in many parts a great resemblance between it and the English translation; but it is impossible that the one was modelled on the other, for Dr. Kennedy informs us, in his preface, that it did not come into his hands until his translation was ready for publication. The notes display a vast deal of that erudition and research, for which Dr. Kennedy is so justly celebrated. On the whole, our Alma has no small reason to be proud of her son, who amid the cares and duties of his station, has found time to accomplish so laborious and creditable a work.*

* The difficulties which a junior fellow of T.C.D. has to encounter, who would publish a laborious work, are very little known or imagined. The duties of public lectures, which absorb five hours daily during term, the general examinations, which employ four hours a day of *bonâ fide* toil also, and various other tedious and distracting duties, are sufficient to harass the mind, and unhinge it for the remainder of the day. All this after the laborious and spirit-wearing toil of reading for the fellowship, would suffice to make most men somewhat languid and careless of fame. The summer vacation is scarcely enough to allow them to recruit strength, and prepare for the encounters of the ensuing year; yet withal, how bright a galaxy of even living names of those who have earned their first celebrity on the fellowship benches, could we now enumerate, did time and ‘our national modesty’ permit. As it is, we shall barely point to the names of William Dublin; two Elringtons, father and son; two Lloyds, father and son; Burroughs, dean of Cork; Robinson, Miller, Hincks; Sadleir, McDonnell, Harte; Singer, Stokes, Crampton and Kennedy; for our limitation to the fellowship benches alone, precludes us from placing the late and present professors of astronomy, Bishop Brinkley and Mr. Hamilton, in the van of our noble army of Dublin University worthies. Let such a cloud of living witnesses sink and silence all senseless gainsayers for ever.